

## MOTORISTS SHOULD KNOW RULES OF TRAFFIC; THEY MUST COOPERATE

By HENRY JAY CASE

Traffic regulation today is more than a uniform policeman with a whistle in his hand or a stop-and-go semaphore on the street corner. Regulations, policemen and the whole machinery of public cooperation for nothing if public cooperation is lacking; and to get this cooperation of the public, traffic regulations must be simply worded. They must be understood by the people, and the policeman enforcing them must also be understood by the people.

Therefore, in earnest, painstaking efforts to teach the public how much they will benefit the people—in educational work such as this—lies the success or failure of a system of traffic regulation.

The time has long since gone by when a police force can make the public bow to traffic regulation by use of the night stick. Legislatures and legislatures won't do it. You can't legislate carelessness out of people. You can't by making laws, stop a man from being reckless or negligent. You can sit in your councils and pass traffic rules all night, but that won't stop people from running in front of an automobile nor automobiles from running over people. To try and save them you have got to win their interest and attention, and in order to win their interest and attention you have got to go before them as a teacher.

In New York City, the police commissioner comes in contact with the citizen, not as a belligerent, but as a friend and helper; he sets the stage for the law's enforcement in a peaceful manner.

To get the best results in this new line of police work, pick and choose your traffic officers carefully. It is no place for a surly man. Unless the traffic officer can take his job good-naturedly, it will go hard with him. He will need every ounce of good nature in his system to hold down this job because no man can pack a grouse for nine hours and be of any use to anyone.

The average foot patrolman deals with about 20 persons a day. The traffic officer personally comes in contact with a thousand. Therefore, pick "Sunny Jim" for your traffic officer; take off "Groucho the Monk."

The traffic man is put on post in New York to use his head as well as his whistle and his smile. He is encouraged to observe and to make suggestions.

Here is a classification of operators made by New York policemen. Maybe you will find yourself in the catalogue:

1. The Owner Who Drives—Generally operates his own car; seems to believe in the golden rule; is intelligent, thoughtful, and anxious to obey regulations; has regard for the safety of those who walk, as well as that of himself and those riding with him; is easy to handle; knows that if he violates traffic rules he himself is responsible not only in a criminal court, but in a civil court as well. In short, we like to deal with the owner who drives his own car, and wish there were more of him.

2. The Owner Who Employs a Chauffeur—Always has money enough to pay his chauffeur's fines; is generally in a hurry; doesn't start from home until the last minute and then frequently takes a chance of violating the law so as to "get there" on time; never doubts his chauffeur's ability to get anywhere within the time available, no matter how impossible the task.

3. The Private Chauffeur—Depends upon his employer's ability and willingness to pay all fines and damages, or his employer's influence with "the powers that be," whatever that may mean, which confidence makes him indifferent to the rights of everyone, except his employer and himself; is supremely content in the knowledge that if he violates any traffic regulation his fines will be paid, and if he injures any one or anything his employer will relieve him of responsibility in a civil suit.

4. The Ex-Coachman Chauffeur—Usually comes from the box in his employer's victoria or landau, is generally of middle age, has a family, is settled in life and thoroughly familiar with traffic regulations by reason of having driven horse-drawn vehicles; almost without exception drives his automobile in a careful and prudent

manner; is seldom seen in court to answer a complaint made against him by a traffic policeman.

5. The Commercial Chauffeur—Generally operates vehicles of high tonnage, his occupation taking him to all parts of the city into localities where there are no traffic policemen; his vehicle, not geared for speed and generally heavily laden and cumbersome, becomes a most dangerous weapon in the hands of a careless or incompetent operator; owner generally carries accident insurance, for the reason that when persons are run over or struck the results are not infrequently fatal. Police officers of experience in handling traffic, knowing the great weight and size of these commercial vehicles, and not without standing the fact that many of them are equipped with governors to regulate their speed, believe that the average driver operating this type of motor truck does not have a control of it commensurate with its possibilities of destroying human life.

6. The Taxi Chauffeur—Ready at almost any time, in return for a small tip, to take a chance to accommodate a passenger; is out for the money, and in many cases doesn't care how he obtains it; doesn't welcome police regulations; is not over-solicitous of the rights of others; and the type is perhaps the worst source of trouble to policemen.

7. The New and Inexperienced Chauffeur—Although many have good judgment, and ultimately become proficient in driving their cars, the large percentage of them, while still wholly incompetent, venture into congested sections of the city, creating bad tangles, causing delay, and, not infrequently, most hazardous situations.

For pedestrians, the following is a fair classification by traffic policemen:

1. The woman shopper who risks her life crossing the street to save five seconds and then wastes 25 times that at the very first stop window.

2. The independent citizen who deliberately walks into the midst of fast moving traffic and defies any driver to run over him.

3. The newspaper reader who believes the middle of the street is a reading room and acts accordingly.

4. The adventurous small boy who professes to bicycle or roller skates on heavy traffic streets rather than on play streets set aside for him.

5. Boys and girls who play tag in and out of swift moving traffic.

6. The average, every-day, law-abiding citizen, who is always willing to do what is right, and through that willingness is invariably imposed upon by drivers.

New York City has 700 policemen in the traffic division, and in this an increasingly large number of Sunny Jims. But to piece out this manpower, the department has to use a number of devices. Some of them are:

1. Safety Isles—These spaces, usually diamond shaped, are marked off with traffic stations. The isles are usually 30 feet long by 5 feet wide, placed in the center of roadways, at street intersections, and at locations where traffic is not heavy enough to necessitate the stationing of a traffic officer. They provide a refuge for pedestrians crossing the street and divide traffic by keeping vehicles to the right and require people to walk in one direction and necessitate their looking in only one direction.

2. Car Stop Safety Zones—These spaces are formed by traffic stations placed on roadways having surface car tracks, particularly at transfer points. These zones add greatly to the safety of persons waiting to board or alight from cars and at the same time permit vehicles to keep moving. They also save time in the operation of the cars.

3. Keep to the Right Signs—These are placed at street intersections where traffic is light but where regulation is necessary to compel drivers to keep to the right and not to cut crossings short.

4. Semaphore System—This is known as the 5-block system and is today in effect on Fifth avenue between 26th and 58th streets. The avenue between these two streets is divided into zones, a semaphore being located at each street intersection. Each zone is controlled from the mas-

ter station, the operator of which, under ordinary circumstances, permits north and south traffic to proceed over a period of about one minute and 40 seconds. When the man at the master station turns his semaphore to permit traffic to proceed north and south on the avenue, the man at each of the other semaphores instantly turns his semaphore to allow traffic to proceed north and south.

When the man at the master station signals for east and west bound traffic to move, the other men at the other stations in this zone do likewise unless there is no east and west traffic waiting, in which case they leave their stations set for north and south. The master semaphore when set to allow crosstown, or east and west, traffic to proceed, is usually set in this position from 40 to 50 seconds.

The one binding thing in this regulation is that when the master station is set for traffic to proceed north and south on the avenue, all of the other semaphores within the zone are likewise set.

In order to work this system it has been found necessary to adopt the following regulations:

Vehicles proceeding north or south on Fifth avenue and desiring to turn left into side streets must (1) either turn right and go around the block, or (2) form a line in the center of the roadway back of the crosswalk, wait for the officer's signal and then pass in front, instead of around the semaphore station.

The officer is to give his signal for such vehicles to turn into side streets when a break in the north and south bound traffic occurs. This is in order that the turn may not interfere with north and south bound traffic.

When there is no break in north or south bound traffic while vehicles are lined in the center of the roadway, waiting to turn left, such vehicles turn left into side streets when east and west traffic is signalled to proceed, taking the head of the line by making a short turn to the left.

In addition, when north and south traffic is proceeding, but is light, and conditions warrant, the officer signals by hand for vehicles in the side streets to proceed in the line of traffic.

5. One Way Streets—These are usually narrow ones where traffic is heavy and the blocks are not long. There are 44 at present, movement of traffic being greatly facilitated and pedestrians having only one line of traffic to watch in crossing streets.

6. Parking Spaces—Besides the spaces regularly set aside by the police commissioner in Manhattan, vehicles are permitted to stand at the curb providing they do not obstruct traffic. There are no set rules for parking privileges, traffic conditions wholly governing.

7. Slow Moving Vehicles Keep to the Right—By compelling slow moving vehicles to hug the right hand curb and keeping obstructions from the roadway, thoroughfares are kept cleaner and safer for drivers and pedestrians. Vehicles backed up to the curb, except while actually loading or unloading, are strictly prohibited.

8. Playground Streets—During certain hours of the day, usually 3 to 6 p. m., vehicles are prohibited from passing through certain streets in the congested part of the city, officers being detailed to enforce this regulation and to protect children who are directed to these streets to play, safely removed from the danger of being run down by fast moving vehicles.

9. Backyard Playgrounds—By co-operating with the owners of property many of the interior courts of the larger blocks in the congested districts have been transformed into playgrounds by tearing down the fences, grading the areas, and erecting playground apparatus. Only children living in the houses facing the yards are permitted in these yards and attendants are assigned to supervise and direct the games. This is another successful means of drawing children off the streets and away from the dangerous street accidents.

10. School Streets—To further safeguard children, school street signs, during school hours, have been placed in front and at the intersection of streets where public schools are located. These warn drivers to go slow and to look out for children at play.

When "Groucho the Monk" was the traffic policeman the number of arrests in a day was his battling average. With "Sunny Jim" at work today summonses and arrests are avoided wherever possible. Don't mistake this as an invitation to come to town and break traffic regulations. The traffic officer does not serve summonses and make arrests for traffic violation today if there be any reasonable doubt. Summonses and arrests take policemen off the streets where they are rendering service and keep them in court.

Instead of summonses and arrests, in doubtful cases drivers are served with a warning and this warning is promptly recorded at headquarters. If the same driver is again found breaking a traffic regulation he receives a second warning. This warning goes to headquarters, where it automatically, in the card index system, finds the first warning. If the driver receives a third warning it automatically finds the second and a summons for his appearance in court immediately issues. The magistrate disposes of this third offense. If the person be convicted, the magistrate is then furnished with a record of warning No. 1 and warning No. 2, and in passing sentence upon the third offense he considers the facts in offense No. 1 and offense No. 2.

So thoroughly do I believe in the effectiveness of a system of warnings as applied to this class of cases that I wish to dwell for a moment upon this subject.

To repeat, a traffic policeman standing in the middle of the street using his hands is of more value than he is when sitting in court with his hands in his pockets waiting for the disposition of his case.

Let me liken a traffic policeman on duty to a monitor or a teacher in a school. If the teacher was always engaged in corporal punishment there would be little time for maintaining order in the room. The issuing of a summons by a police officer might be likened to the administering punishment by a teacher. Summonses, like corporal punishment, must only be inflicted when the case is urgent. This is not a beautifully spun theory. Like all practices, it was theory once.

Every castle is built in the air before it is built on earth. I am glad to say that four months' experience with the warning system, as I have outlined, has proved its worth beyond the shadow of a doubt.

When an administrative power ex-

ercises clemency it must inflict a rigorous punishment when the clemency is not accepted by the public in a proper spirit, and so, when a sympathetic magistrate finds that the public will not meet the forces of law and order at least half way the mag-

istrate must go seven-eighths of the way to meet the offender. In other words, he must fine him severely or imprison him. If you attempt to become lenient under certain conditions, without becoming rigidly severe under certain other conditions, you will

bring the administration of law into contempt and make of yourselves what an American statesman once called a mollycoddle. A man once warned is always told (Continued on page 4)

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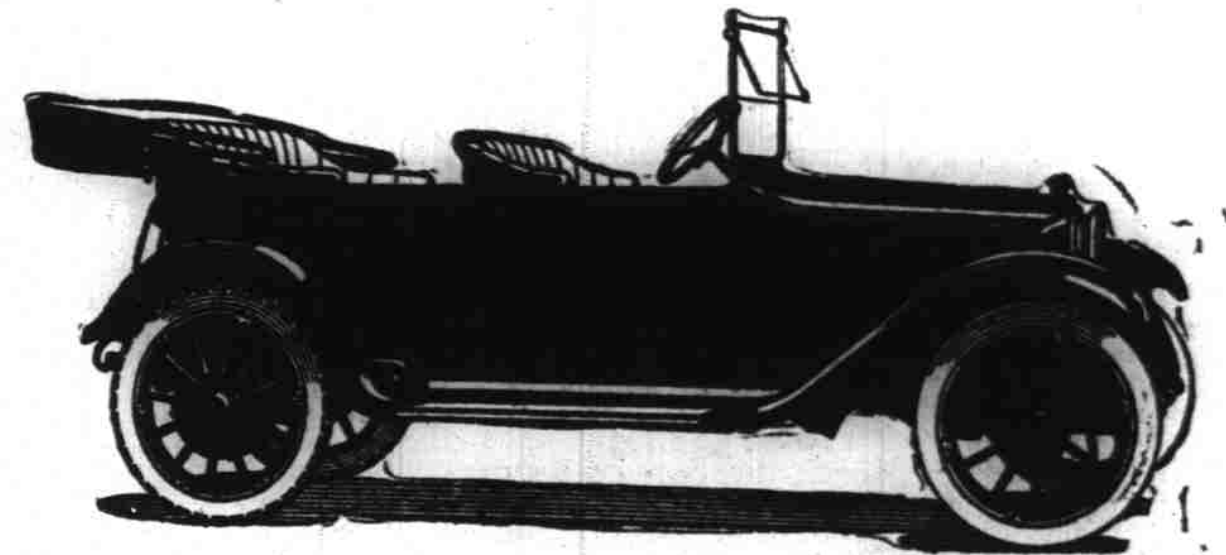
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